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NOTES AND MEMORANDA.

THE NEW ECONOMICS TRIPOS AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY.

England has recently had from high quarters her warning to "wake up," if she would maintain her industrial and commercial position ; but her universities had already begun to remove the reproach — largely justified in the past — that they have neglected that thorough training in economics which this generation is coming to recognize as essential both to the intelligent government of business and to the increasingly complex business of government. One after another the British universities are instituting faculties or constructing curricula which aim to give to economics a properly equal status among higher studies. They are seeking to provide not merely for the needs of specialists, but also for that greater class of students who justly ask that their undergraduate years shall offer opportunity for some serious preparation to meet the urgent and intricate problems of modern business and public life. The new teaching universities of London and Birmingham have led the way by the creation of special faculties, the enterprising London School of Economics forming in the one case the nucleus for a Faculty of Economics and Political Science, while at Birmingham Professor Ashley is inaugurating the work of a Faculty of Commerce. Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and the Scottish universities are following on similar lines ; and the two older universities, with characteristic deliberation, but with equally characteristic thoroughness, are taking preliminary steps in the same direction. At Cambridge the matter has been the subject of much discussion for the last decade, but it was not until the spring of 1900 that Professor Sidgwick became convinced that the time had come for advance. His death delayed action for more than a year ;

but the movement has now been started by Professor Marshall, who in April, 1902, addressed to the University Senate a persuasive *Plea for the Creation of a Curriculum in Economics and Associated Branches of Political Science*. A syndicate of thirteen members, including Drs. Cunningham, Maitland, Westlake, Keynes, and Professors Marshall and Sorley, was thereupon appointed to inquire into the best means of enlarging the opportunities for these studies in Cambridge. The report of this committee, from which we note in passing that the signatures of Drs. Cunningham and Maitland are absent, has recently been published in the official *Cambridge University Reporter* (for March 10, 1903). The report recommends the establishment of an honors examination in economics and politics, with a special board to watch over this department of work, and at the same time proposes for the approval of the Senate definite regulations and examination schedules for the new Tripos.

Hitherto it has been a matter of considerable difficulty for the average Cambridge student to make any thorough study of economics during his three years' undergraduate course. It has been only by a devious route that this object could even be approximately attained. He has been able, it appears, to take the examination known as Part I. of the Historical Tripos at the end of his second year, including a certain amount of work in economics with a much larger proportion of mediæval and general history than seems desirable for the student of modern conditions. The Historical Board has indeed made increasingly liberal provision for the interests of such students, but unless the character of the Historical Tripos be radically changed, economics under such tutelage must play only a subordinate part. The student of economics may then, in his third year, continue with that division of Part II. of the Moral Science Tripos in which candidates are allowed to specialize in political philosophy and advanced economics. But it is naturally felt to be an anomalous arrangement, and one not free from practical difficulties, by which the responsibility for the young economist's training is shared by two boards, one chiefly concerned with psychology, logic, and ethics, and the other unable to give any adequate attention to economics in

its broader aspects, or even to recent history, especially on its economic side. This makeshift, a compromise with the curricula of a past generation, is now to be replaced by an independent Tripos which affords opportunity for as much thorough work in economics and in related modern subjects as can well be compassed in an undergraduate course.

The new program, following the English university practice, is set forth in the schedule of examination subjects. For the first honors examination, to be taken normally at the end of the second year of residence, seven papers are to be set, all obligatory. Three of these cover the general principles of economics, and two deal with the recent economic and general history of the United Kingdom, of the other English-speaking peoples, and of France and Germany. Some knowledge of physical geography in relation to recent economic development is also here required. The existing British constitution, including a comparative study of the government of colonies and dependencies, is the subject of another paper; while the seventh consists of an essay on some assigned subject. The second part of the Economics Tripos, taken a year later, is to have fourteen papers. Public finance and the economic functions of government are to receive especial attention in the three papers on General Economics; and questions dealing with the structure and problems of modern industry (including transportation), wages and conditions of employment, money, credit and prices, and international trade are to be scattered between the four papers on Advanced Economics. Two of these are to be of a realistic or descriptive and two of a more analytic character, including the more difficult problems of value, the history of economic doctrines, and some of the applications of mathematics to economics. Six papers are devoted to cognate subjects in politics and law, one of these on the political theories of the nineteenth century, two on international law with reference to existing political and economic conditions, two on the principles of law in their application to economic questions, and the sixth on some special subject, chosen from time to time, in the field of recent economic and general history or in foreign or colonial political administrative organization. Part II. includes also an essay subject; and this, together with

the three papers on General Economics, and not less than two or more than five of the remaining papers, is obligatory on all candidates. Even in these obligatory examination papers a considerable number of questions are to be optional, thus allowing scope for specialization. All candidates are to be set certain questions which assume a working knowledge of French and German. If the recommendations of the syndicate are adopted, the first examination for Part I. of the new Tripos will be held in 1905, and for Part II. in 1906, so that the preparatory work must commence without delay, although, as the committee points out, the present teaching staff is insufficient for the enlarged course.

It will be apparent from this outline that the severance of economics from its older companions, history and the moral sciences, is practically complete, and that effect has been given to Professor Marshall's preference for law as a new associate. Some shred, indeed, of the present connection with the moral sciences will be retained in the new curriculum. Logic and psychology are to be altogether excluded, but the papers on General Economics in Part II. of the Tripos are to include some questions on the ethical aspects of economic problems. All history, however, previous to the nineteenth century, is shaken off with scant courtesy. The new Tripos will aim above all at 'actuality'; it confines itself solely to the study of recent and existing conditions. "No time," so the report runs, following Professor Marshall's lead, "can be spared for a detailed study of earlier periods." But there is not only no detailed study, there is not even place provided for a mere outline of earlier economic history. Many will regard this as a serious omission. While the practical effort to give academic attention and standing to the investigation of contemporary economic problems deserves and will receive approval, it is regrettable that, in the reaction from perhaps an excess of political and constitutional history, the historical side seems now likely to be totally neglected in the undergraduate's training. While not going so far as to claim that economic history is the sole or necessarily always the best avenue of approach to economic studies, or with the extremists of the historical school to assert that the study of the laws of economic develop-

ment should form the sole content of the science, one may nevertheless question the wisdom of exclusive undergraduate absorption in present-day interests and problems without some historical corrective. Professor Marshall insists that "only those facts should be studied which are strictly necessary to give reality and a sense of proportion to the student's thought"; but it may be doubted whether, without the perspective of history, even a minute and detailed study under the guidance of such a master as Professor Marshall can give the student a picture of modern conditions which shall possess adequate proportion and reality.

As a make-weight however, though history and philosophy are to be thus curtailed, economics itself in its general enlargement makes one noteworthy extension. As Professor Marshall indicates, "one chief weakness of the present study of economics in Cambridge is that it is perforce insular." This insularity is to be corrected in the emphasis placed throughout the new schedule on the study of the experiences of the colonies, of the United States and of Western Europe. This is seen not only in the examination subjects for Part I., but also in Part II. of the Tripos, where the syndicate heads the definitions of the scope of the papers with the general rule that "throughout Part II. international comparisons shall be introduced where practicable."

On the whole, this new departure in one of our oldest English-speaking universities is a distinct advance which will be warmly welcomed by economists generally, and will doubtless be approved by the English public, to whose awakened sense of efficiency the universities cannot afford to be indifferent.

EDWIN F. GAY.

WHILE the English universities have been enlarging their plans for teaching economics, the British Economic Association has been granted a royal charter, and will henceforth be known as the Royal Economic Society of Great Britain. These two changes are significant of the great renewal of interest in economic subjects in the early home of the science.